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# CIA Shows Its Cloak of Security in Beret Case

WASHINGTON (Reuters) —

The Green Beret murder case offered dramatic proof that the Central Intelligence Agency is answerable to no one except the President of the United States.

**Analysis**  
**WHAT THE NEWS MEANS**

There was nothing the Army could do about the C.I.A. refusal to drop its cloak of anonymity and help the Army prosecute an alleged case of murder.

The refusal is sanctioned by two acts of Congress, passed in 1947 and 1949, which protect the spy organization from public scrutiny.

Only President Nixon has the right to overrule the C.I.A. on its definition of national security — the ground it cited for refusing to testify. A White House spokesman, belatedly acknowledging Nixon's role, said the President personally approved the C.I.A. decision.

THE ARMY prepared its ground carefully, rejecting heavy congressional and public pressure on behalf of six Green Beret officers it planned to court martial.

They were charged with drugging and shooting a suspected Viet Cong double agent, Thai Khac Chuyen, and dumping his body in a sack in the South China Sea. No body ever was found.

Army Secretary Stanley R. Resor went on record that the only way to end the innuendo and mystery about the case

was a fair trial. He ordered that the proceedings be held in open session except where classified information was involved.

The C.I.A. was believed to have wanted its name cleared of early charges that it ordered the removal of the alleged double agent.

But it probably decided prudence was best when it saw that some of the country's best trial lawyers were threatening to bring out the most sensitive information at the trial.

F. Lee Bailey, the civilian lawyer for Capt. Robert F. Marasco, the alleged triggerman in the case, said there would have been a "thorough rummaging into the operations of the C.I.A."

There were signs, too, that the C.I.A. refusal to testify was not unwelcome in many levels of the Nixon administration, concerned as they were that the whole American intelligence operation in Vietnam would be jeopardized by the trial.

BUT DESPITE the cogent reasons for the C.I.A. refusal, its slap at the Army nevertheless reawakened long-held feelings of uneasiness in Washington, where the agency's power has been a subject of hot debate for years.

Under the scholarly looking Allen Dulles in the earlier years of the decade, the intelligence organization came under heavy attack from critics who claimed it was acting as an invisible government, ex-

erting too great an influence on administration policy.

It was under Dulles that the agency was credited with its biggest error — supporting the abortive Bay of Pigs Cuban invasion by exiled opponents of Premier Fidel Castro.

After this fiasco, late President John F. Kennedy ordered a thorough review of the agency's role and the government's methods of evaluating intelligence information.

Under its present chief, Richard Helms, 56, the C.I.A. has managed to keep out of the headlines with more success, with no major blunders since the exposure two years ago of its secret financing of student organizations.

THE FUNDS that Helms has at his disposal are a closely guarded secret — estimates range from \$1 billion a year upward.

The C.I.A. chief maintains a close relationship with the F.B.I. and other government agencies, but in the main keeps in the background as far as the public is concerned.

The C.I.A. is believed to have more employees in Vietnam than it has ever had in any foreign country. It has overall responsibility for all secret agents there.

The primary mission of the 3,000 army Green Berets in Vietnam is to advise Vietnamese irregulars in remote camps. But of the six men who were to be tried for murder and conspiracy to commit murder, five were reported to have been assigned to a special Army unit manned by 25 to 50 Americans which was responsible for operating networks of Vietnamese agents throughout Vietnam.